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Dear Colonel White,

A week ago we took my mother into another hospital after the previous one had pronounced her a "terminal case," with a life expectancy up to ninety days. Her pain is continuous and increasing and only the use of hypodermics makes what's left of life bearable. There's no indication that the prognosis of this hospital will differ from that of the other. The attending doctor told me yesterday that while the chance of anything even like partial recovery is remote, the staff must proceed on the principle of prolonging life as far as possible in the hope, however theoretical that a cure may be discovered. The pain she's enduring is the most torturing thing I've ever watched in my life, yet it may go on for weeks. On the other hand, the doctor says such patients not infrequently pass away suddenly without apparent immediate cause.

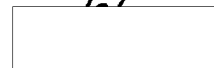
In such circumstances, you can appreciate that the question of returning to Washington at the end of four weeks will be an extremely difficult one for me. If there had been any assured life expectancy period I should have been able to complete, or at least, begin the reorientation period & then return here. In view of the considerable help already given me in the matter of an early reorientation leave, I'm naturally reluctant to ask for extended concessions, and I don't intend this as such a request, particularly since the circumstances remain unpredictable. Apropos our conversation, I've given you as clear a picture as possible about the general situation here in the expectation that you would then be in a better position to advise.

When I left Washington, I had an earned leave increment of over eight weeks. I don't know the procedures with regard to leave without pay, nor whether they are even applicable in these circumstances.

The picture's pretty confused, but given the facts, I think it would be hard for it to be otherwise. I still would like to return to England, and I know none of this will make that any easier for you to bring off. At anyrate, I'll be anxious to hear whatever suggestions or information you have to offer.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



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